

many times with personnel awards including Navy and Marine Corps Commendations Medals, three Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medals, the Presidential Service Badge, and six Marine Corps Good Conduct Medals. For 20 years, he has helped make our country a safer place in which to live. I ask my colleagues in the 109th Congress to join me in congratulating him, and wishing him well in his retirement as well as all his future endeavors.

#### HURRICANE KATRINA

### HON. CHRIS VAN HOLLEN

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 8, 2005

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to extend my deepest condolences to the victims of Hurricane Katrina, who lost their lives, their homes, their communities, and their livelihoods. My thoughts and prayers are with them and their families.

I have been very disappointed in what appears to have been a slow federal response to this disaster. In addition, many appeared to have ignored warnings over the years about the potential vulnerabilities and the steps that could be taken to prepare for this situation.

It is my hope that we can come together on a bipartisan basis and work to review and assess the adequacy of the early federal, state, and local preparedness. We must also continue to focus on providing immediate assistance to those in need. I am pleased that the Congress convened on an emergency basis to provide more than 10 billion dollars for disaster relief efforts and trust we are providing an additional \$52 billion today. In addition, I have been working with federal, state, and local officials to ensure that Maryland does everything it can to support the relief efforts. The State of Maryland has dispatched members of its National Guard and Montgomery County has dispatched search and rescue squad personnel. Other local governments are actively exploring ways that they can help. I am especially proud of the people throughout our community and country's outpouring of support for those whose lives have been shattered by Hurricane Katrina. They have opened their arms, their homes, and their pocketbooks.

Mr. Speaker, while the enormity of this tragedy is overwhelming, I am confident that a spirit of determination and generosity will ensure that we will rebuild and endure. Our strength as a nation will be evident in the days to come as communities throughout our country unite to provide assistance to those in need.

#### ON PASSAGE OF H.R. 3673

### HON. TODD RUSSELL PLATTS

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 8, 2005

Mr. PLATTS. Mr. Speaker, as Chairman of the Government Reform Subcommittee on Management, Finance, and Accountability, I rise today to express my concern for the victims and to emphasize the importance of ensuring that every dollar allocated to this relief effort gets to its intended recipient. As we

pass this important relief measure, let me assure all Americans that we stand ready, willing, and able to assist the victims of Hurricane Katrina. As we prepare to provide the appropriate and necessary assistance to ensure our citizens can rebuild their lives, we must administer these Disaster Assistance funds responsibly.

Over the past two years, my Subcommittee has held three hearings on management at the Department of Homeland Security. While not always the most exciting topic, it is strong, sound management that will enable us to get through a crisis of this magnitude. Last year, in the aftermath of the Florida hurricanes, FEMA administered grants through the Individuals and Households Program. Just as we seek to do today, these grants were intended to provide emergency relief to those most impacted. Unfortunately, according to a report by the Department of Homeland Security Office of Inspector General (Audit of FEMA's Individuals and Households Program in Miami-Dade County, Florida, for Hurricane Frances, OIG-05-20), there were numerous documented instances of improper payments.

The assistance that we are providing to the victims of Hurricane Katrina is too important to be misspent. The Federal government has a responsibility to ensure the proper and effective distribution of aid. Any dollar lost to fraud or mismanagement is a dollar that does not make it to someone who is in need.

With the passage of the Stafford Act (Public Law 93-288) and its subsequent amendments, the Congress put in place specific requirements for the effective allocation of disaster funds. This statutory framework is designed to protect these resources from those who would seek to gain at the expense of the victims of disasters such as Hurricane Katrina. With sound management, appropriate controls and accountability, we will have the means to continue to provide resources to those who are truly in need of assistance.

#### SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS FOR HURRICANE KATRINA

### HON. JOSEPH CROWLEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 8, 2005

Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of these supplemental appropriations for the victims of Hurricane Katrina.

As someone who helped rebuild my city, New York City, after the terror attacks of 9/11 and as someone who lost over 110 constituents, countless friends and my first cousin to the horrors of the World Trade Center, I know the pain and suffering the people of the Gulf Coast are feeling and their despair.

When America hurts, America helps.

The damage of Hurricane Katrina is much greater than the physical destruction that was left in its wake. And it is much more than the psychological trauma that has affected these survivors who are now displaced. The damage is so great, and the lack of response from our Federal Government in the immediate days after this storm was so small, that it begs for this Congress to demand answers.

Why was the agency that is responsible for our emergency response, FEMA, so woefully under-prepared and under-funded?

Why did the director of FEMA have no emergency management experience?

Why was funding for the Army Corps of Engineers designated to protect the City of New Orleans from a dangerous flood of this level, diverted to pay for tax cuts for the wealthiest 1 percent of Americans?

These questions demand answers.

Last week we saw many shocking images of poverty and economic disparities among us. Like many parts of many cities in this country, the tourist trodden French Quarter with fancy hotels and restaurants are worlds away from the reality for the people who work in them. One third of the city of New Orleans lived below the poverty line, and these people, mostly African American, were the ones who were most impacted by this storm and the mismanagement of the Federal response.

We also saw positive images of Americans helping Americans in need. We saw a young six year old boy; lead his siblings to safety and to be re-united with his family. We saw neighbors help out other neighbors to get them to safety, and we saw the National Guard many fresh off duty in Iraq, put on their boots and wade into the water to save lives.

This money today will provide an immediate infusion of cash to provide healthcare for displaced people, emergency housing vouchers for people without a home, emergency unemployment insurance for people now without a job, and money for debris removal and systems to provide clean water to the city of New Orleans.

This money partners with the amazing response of the American people and the world community to the victims of Hurricane Katrina. Constituents throughout my district have volunteered their time, contributions and money to help the people of the Gulf remembering how these same people helped us after 9/11. When America hurts, America helps and the remarkable sacrifice and contributions of so many people who have opened up their wallets and homes to these victims is what makes our country so great.

Today's support is a strong step, but it not the last step. The last time this many people were displaced was during the Civil War. This Congress must get back to work in a bipartisan manner, and address the needs both immediate and future, of the victims of Hurricane Katrina. And we should not adjourn or recess until we do so. Tax-cuts, estate tax repeal, plans to privatize Social Security, should all take a back burner, while these people suffer.

We must work to bring the full Federal resources of this government to help these people get back into their homes and quickly as possible, and to rebuild their lives.

We must use this tragedy as an opportunity to improve the quality of life for these residents of New Orleans and the Gulf Coast. For one-third of the people of the city of New Orleans to be living in poverty, sub-standard housing with poor healthcare, is inexcusable in this the richest country in the world. We must raise living standards through job training, better schools and stronger neighborhoods and eradicate the hopeless conditions so many Americans live in not only in the Gulf region but throughout our Nation. Let us use this terrible storm to learn a lesson and commit us to a new war on poverty that will truly bring Americans who are living in 19th Century poverty into the 21st Century through better housing, healthcare and education.

And we must use this as an opportunity to find out what went wrong, how our government whose responsibility is protecting its citizens, failed so miserably in the Gulf Region and how we can prevent this tragedy again. I call for an independent Commission, bipartisan with the full authority of the 9/11 Commission to get to the bottom of this, and recommend to the Congress the changes that will be necessary to protect American lives in the future.

#### STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF THE HURRICANE KATRINA SUPPLEMENTAL

**HON. NITA M. LOWEY**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, September 8, 2005*

Mrs. LOWEY. I rise today in support of this legislation, a down payment toward fulfilling our obligation to help the citizens and cities ravaged by Hurricane Katrina.

The tragedy of Katrina has exposed some difficult truths of American life. That the richest Nation on earth is just as vulnerable to the laws of nature as the poorest. That the haves are not only poorer than the have-nots—they are also less safe.

The tragedy has also brought into sharp focus the debate about the role of government in citizens' lives. It has exposed the fallacy advanced by the leadership of this Congress and the administration that government is the problem, and it can't ever be the solution.

I believe that government should work with the private sector to help people help themselves to achieve their goals. Government should be a partner in making the lives of Americans better.

Unfortunately, too often, on the floor of this chamber, we've heard from Members who bemoan the size of the government and blast programs to help vulnerable populations, even as they tout legislation providing billions in Federal resources to the most powerful and connected companies and individuals in this country. They have been allowed to snip away at the web of structures put in place to help the American people.

Katrina was the deluge that exposed what we have warned of all along—when you starve the government, it fails those who need it most.

In times of crisis and in times of need, the people expect—and should expect—that their government will stand with them. American taxpayers deserve strong, competent leaders who jump into action, rather than ignore crisis and delay response. Who take responsibility, not rush to point fingers. Who understand that government is necessary and can be a force for good.

Last week, the U.S. Government failed its people. This legislation is merely one step toward repairing this breach of basic trust, and I urge my colleagues to support it.

#### STATEMENT ON THE SECOND EMERGENCY SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS FOR HURRICANE KATRINA RESPONSE

**HON. KENDRICK B. MEEK**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, September 8, 2005*

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, in this time of national tragedy, the merits of this bill are obvious. The American people are generous and insist that we offer aid and assistance to Hurricane Katrina's survivors.

The confidence of our nation was shaken by the slowness and shortcomings of the federal government's response to this massive human tragedy.

While this Second Emergency Supplemental Appropriations for Hurricane Katrina Response provides an additional \$51.8 billion for hurricane relief, much more will need to be done.

Congress must ensure that the victims, and the state, local, federal and private agencies that are trying to care for them, have the resources they need.

However, it is not enough to just vote for large funding bills. Americans also want accountability on the over \$60 billion we have appropriated so far for Hurricane Katrina relief.

We have to make sure that the relief money we are appropriating today and in the future actually gets to the victims, and is not used on unscrupulous contractors or spent on projects that boost the profits of companies seeking to profit at the expense of the hurricane victims and the taxpayers. This was the case in Iraq, where hundreds of millions of dollars were either "lost" or improperly paid to contractors like Halliburton.

To make sure that the \$2 billion that FEMA is now spending every day is properly used, I believe that, even as we appropriate billions for hurricane relief, we also provide additional resources to the Office of the Inspector General of the Department of Homeland Security to help ensure that the additional tens of billions of dollars that will be necessary to care for our fellow Americans and rebuild the South are not wasted through fraud, abuse, overpayments or ineffective government management.

We have many good reasons for concern about wasteful spending. In the 3 years since the Department of Homeland Security, the umbrella department that houses FEMA, was created, numerous reports by the Congress, the Department's Inspector General and the Government Accountability Office have detailed instance after instance of contracting deficiencies, fraud, wasteful or lavish spending, lax oversight and management, procurement shortcomings, blurred lines of responsibility and lack of accountability.

I believe that this Congress must make sure, to the greatest extent possible, that the funds that we are appropriating today and in the coming months to help the Hurricane Katrina victims are directed squarely at helping the victims and not those who seek to profit at the expense of the victims who desperately need the help. This is more than just a business opportunity for the Administration's friends. It is an opportunity to do the right thing and help those who are suffering, and it is our obligation.

I also want to express my disappointment in the bicameral review committee created by the

Republican Majority to examine the federal government's response to Hurricane Katrina. This committee, simply put, will be toothless.

#### HURRICANE KATRINA

**HON. AL GREEN**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, September 8, 2005*

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I want to join with persons across this great nation and this world to express my condolences for those who have suffered as a result of Hurricane Katrina. I also want to commend all those people who have worked hard to lift up their fellow man during this time of crisis.

This disaster is one unlike anything we've ever seen before. At one point 80 percent of the city of New Orleans was under water. Up to 1 million families have been displaced. There are estimates that 400,000 to 500,000 people could lose their jobs because of the hurricane. And despite the magnitude of these numbers, they still don't do justice to the human suffering we have seen on television and in person.

But out of every tragedy comes the opportunity for each and every person to show his or her humanity through acts of compassion. That is why I am so proud of my fellow Texans and my fellow Houstonians. From Governor Rick Perry, Mayor Bill White, and Judge Robert Eckels on down, everyone has come together to make sure that we do everything in our power to help the quarter of a million evacuees we have taken in. In the Houston area alone, we have taken in over 100,000 of our neighbors to the east, 15,000 of which were sheltered in the Astrodome, which is in my Congressional District.

Several organizations in the Houston area are leading the disaster relief effort. Some of the help is coming from volunteers with Operation Compassion, a massive relief effort led by Interfaith Ministries for Greater Houston and spearheaded by the Second Baptist Church. The thousands of volunteers from 131 local congregations have assumed primary responsibility for feeding the masses of storm victims who have taken refuge there. I commend them and others for extending their good will towards others.

As we in Congress look towards our next steps, we must ensure that our top priority remains caring for those who have lost loved ones, lost their homes, and lost their means of providing for their families. They have, through no fault of their own, become the least, the last, and the lost of our society. It is our responsibility to help them back on their feet. To do so they will need food stamp assistance and access to Medicaid. They will need temporary emergency housing and the federal assistance to help them rebuild their homes and their lives.

We have taken important first steps by passing a \$10.5 billion disaster relief bill last Friday, followed by an additional \$51.8 billion for the Departments of Defense and Homeland Security today. But these are only the first in a long series of actions that we will need to try to repair the physical damage caused by Hurricane Katrina as well as the lives of those affected by the hurricane. I ask that all of my distinguished colleagues and the